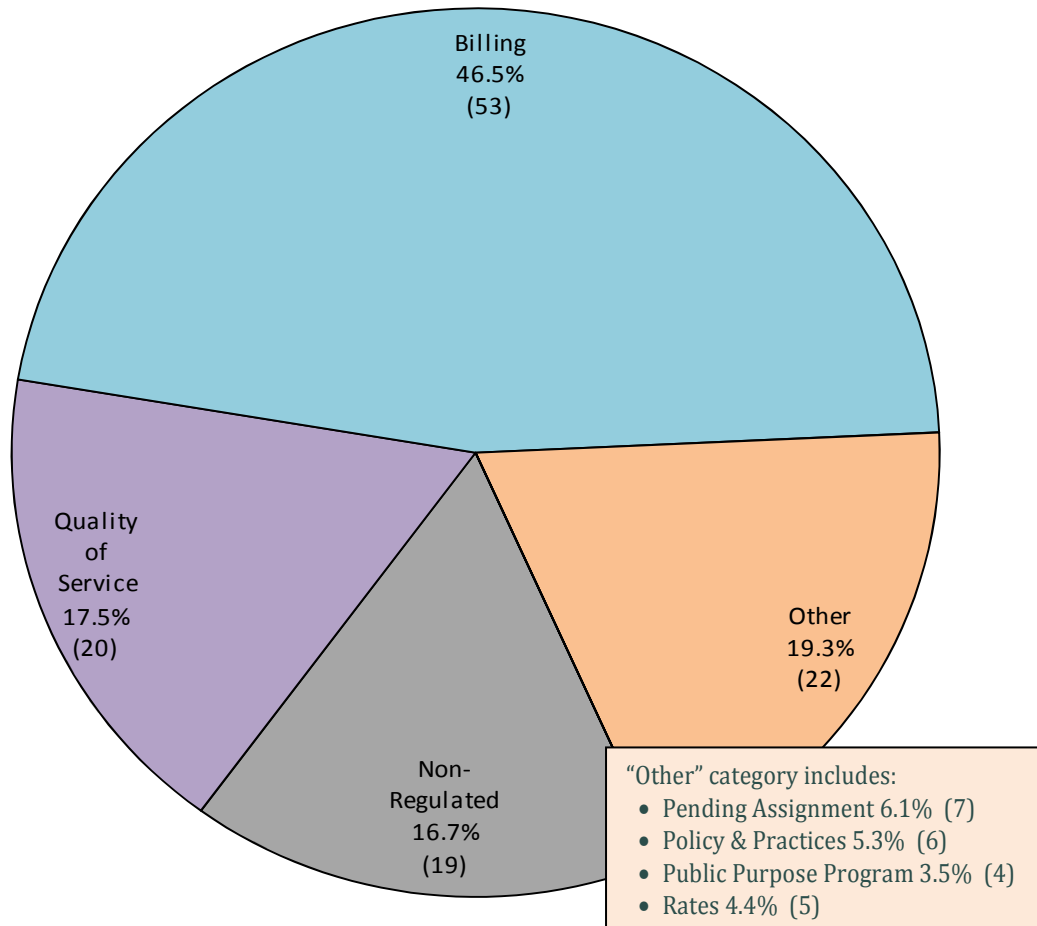


California Public Utilities Commission

October 2013

114 Consumer Contacts* to the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) on
Water Utilities



*Numbers in parenthesis are the actual number of contacts (phone calls, electronic submissions, or letters) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch for each primary category in the Consumer Information Management System (CIMS).

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Top 10 Sub-categories in the Water Industry* Questions, Inquiries, and Complaints Received by CAB <i>Identifies most common consumer topics related to Water in the current month</i>	
Topic	Description
High Bill	Refers to complaints regarding bills that are higher than normal, and consumers cannot think of possible reasons that could account for the level of use as stated on the bill. This also includes duplicate billing issues.
Disconnection Non Payment	Refers to a consumer's utility service being shut off. This can be initiated by the consumer or by the utility for a non-payment.
Non Jurisdictional Company Practice	Refers to utility processes not related to the regulated oversight of the Commission. The major source of this subcategory, are operational decisions a utility company enforces (Not included: tariffs, rates, rules, and billing dates). For example, most operational decisions include matters related to labor relations, decisions to consolidate the utilities workforce, or determining where the utility can cost effectively provide service.
Payment Arrangements	Refers to a form of utility assistance that allows consumers to repay a past due bill amount over a period of time. Many utilities do not offer this type of arrangement particularly the cell phone industry. Utilities may elect not to enter into a pay plan with consumers based on a prior broken arrangement.
Low Income/Special Needs	Refers to programs that are designed to reduce monthly billed charges or one-time assistance for low income and special needs consumers [such as Low-Income Energy Efficiency, Water Low Income Programs, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Home Energy Assistance Program, United Way, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, etc.]. This subcategory is not used for the Lifeline or California Alternative Rates for Energy programs.
Rate Protest	Refers to any complaint relating to a rate proposal that is pending or has been approved by the Commission. If pending, complaint may be referred to the Public Advisor's Office (PAO).
Non Jurisdictional Customer Service	Refers to customer service related issues such as being transferred from one person to another multiple times within one phone call, not being able to reach the correct department and/or someone who could deal with the issue, and rude utility representatives.
Non Jurisdictional Surcharges/Taxes	Refers to a fee or tax imposed by the city, county, state, or federal government agency that is in addition to basic tariffed rates. These fees are often used to fund special programs and are allowable for the utility company to charge the consumer.
Commission Policy/Rules	Consumer has question, complaint, or concern regarding Commission policies, practices, rules, general orders, or decisions. Only for Commission actions.
Refusal To Serve	Refers to when a utility refuses to provide service to a customer or location because of unpaid prior bills.

*For the month of October 2013 only, the top ten subcategories of complaints will be provided on an industry-wide basis and not on the more detailed level that has been provided in previous months. CAB upgraded its internal database with new business rules to improve case processing. The business rules became active on November 1, 2013, leaving October as a transitional month with respect to categorizing contacts. Beginning with November 2013, and going forward from there, the data will be presented in the historical format with the more detailed level of subcategories.

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